

THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff. Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors. Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

Mark Smith
Editor in chief

Jay Robbins
Senior Managing Editor

Heather Winch
Managing Editor for Business

Sterling Hayman
Opinion Editor

Erin Hill
Asst. opinion editor

EDITORIAL

RESPONSIBLE READING

The CSISD should ensure that students learn how to prevent pregnancies and STDs.

The College Station Independent School District is acting irresponsibly by refusing to use any of the three state-adopted health textbooks that contain information about contraceptives. As a result, it is sending the wrong message to students and denying them important information.

In this day and age, it is vital for students above a fifth-grade level to learn not only about sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancies, but also how to prevent them. This mission will not be accomplished if students are not taught about contraceptive devices.

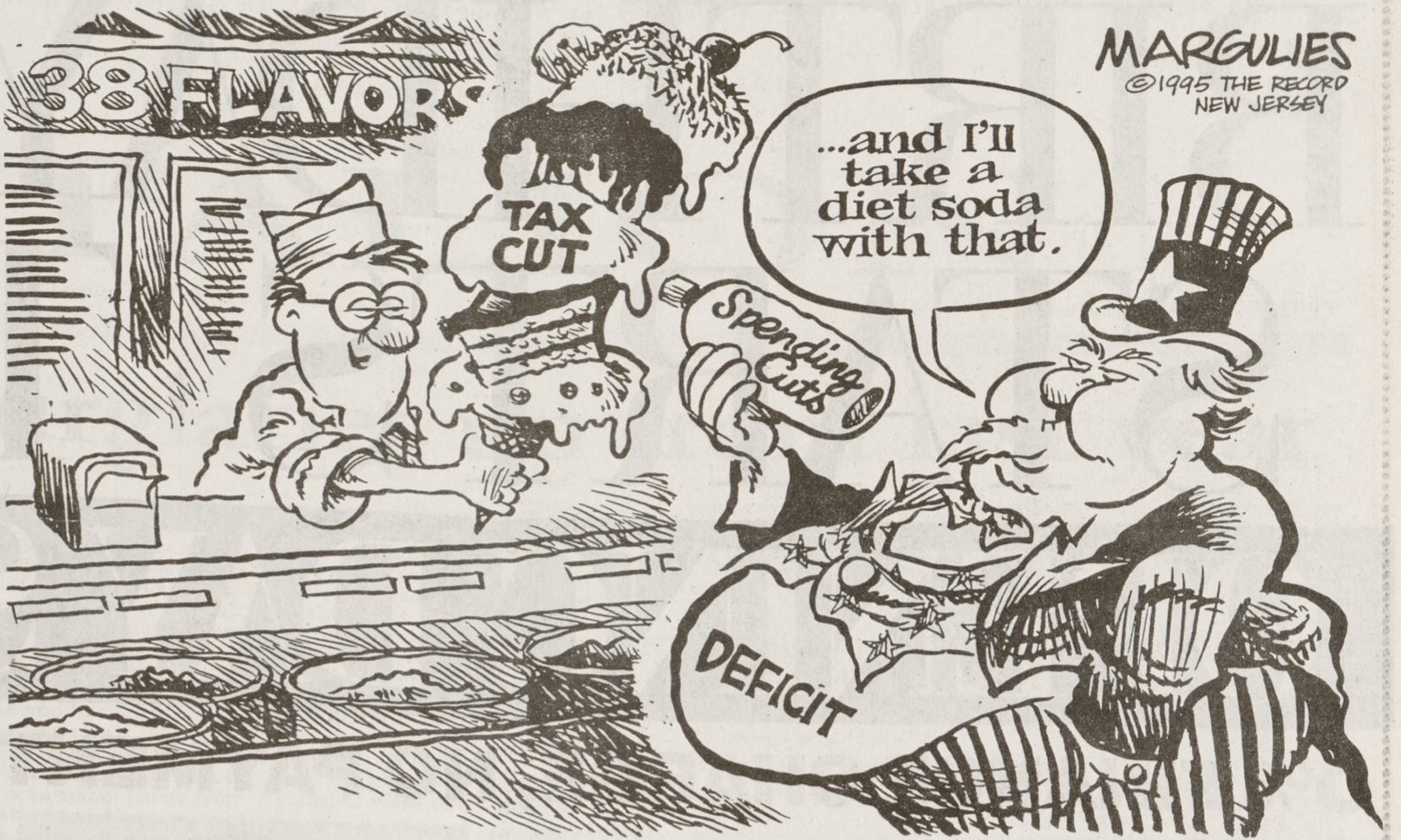
It is naive to think that all students will use abstinence as a method of preventing STDs and pregnancies. This is by no means realistic. Individuals as young as 13 years old may be engaging in sexual activity and at the same time may be becoming a statistic of AIDS or of teenage pregnancies. As a society, people believe that the rate of AIDS is entirely too high, but ironically, some schools are refusing to teach about prevention.

All aspects of sex education, including the use of contraceptives, must

start in the schools. While it is true that some children may learn about sex in the home, in today's world the classroom is the only forum for such discussions for many students. If children do not hear it from parents or teachers, they will hear it from friends and other sources; and in most cases, they will be presented erroneous and possibly detrimental information.

By teaching children at a young age about the dangers of unprotected sex and the methods of prevention, these children have a better chance to grow up to be mature, responsible adults who understand the consequences of their actions. This may not be true in all cases, but by teaching about contraceptives in health classes, perhaps the number of AIDS cases and other sexually transmitted diseases will begin to decrease.

The College Station Independent School District should reconsider their choice about these state-adopted health books. Institutions of public education must strive to keep up with the needs of a changing, and one such need is the education of our youth about the dangers of unprotected sex.



MARGULIES
©1995 THE RECORD
NEW JERSEY

Aggie Buck expansion raises questions

The evolution of Aggie Bucks took another step forward last week when the Texas House of Representatives passed a bill permitting the usage of Aggie Bucks at off-campus locations.

DREW DIENER
COLUMNIST



For the bill to be enacted, it must pass a vote in the Texas Senate. Assuming the bill passes in the Senate, students will likely be able to purchase books, groceries, meals, gas and other goods at various off-campus businesses.

Although University officials are unsure exactly what products would be available for purchase with Aggie Bucks, it is almost certain that alcoholic beverages will not be among them.

In an April 21 article in The Battalion, which announced the bill's passage in the House, Texas Aggie Bookstores owner John Raney said that, "the only concern that the University has expressed to local businesses is that alcohol could not be purchased."

The University's stance on this matter raises the question: By not allowing Aggie Bucks to be used in purchasing alcohol, is the University trying to govern the morals of the student body and community, or is the University being apprehensive of any legal debacle it may face if someone was to purchase alcohol with his or her Aggie Bucks and get into an alcohol-related accident?

The University would almost assuredly justify their position by claiming the latter. But how much, if any, trouble could the University find itself in if an alcohol-related accident was to occur after someone involved purchased alcohol with his or her Aggie Bucks?

If the University would indeed find themselves in the heat of legal turmoil over such an incident, then their stance on the policy is correct. In the case of Aggie Bucks, the University, a state institution, is essentially acting as a broker in that they hold debit accounts for students that allow for purchase of items outside of University domain. Without the University acting in such a capacity, Aggie Bucks would only be allowed to be used at University-owned businesses like the dining halls. That is considered a monopoly, and that's why the scope of Aggie Bucks usage will, with an almost assured passing vote in the Senate, expand to off-campus businesses.

So if the University is essentially a mere broker in the purchasing process, why would they face legal consequences if an alcohol-related accident were to occur? In its capacity as a

broker, the University selects which businesses will be allowed to take Aggie Bucks as a purchasing means.

By selecting the businesses that will be allowed to deal in Aggie Bucks, the University has a hand in the purchasing process even if it is not selling the products itself.

It would appear, that as a broker, the University has made itself a viable cog in the legal puzzle if something tragic were to happen.

However, who's to say that if a person uses his or her Aggie Bucks to buy a piece of pizza from an off-campus vendor, and that person gets some horrid digestive disease, that the University would not be liable. Acting as a broker, the University selected that business as one that would be allowed to accept Aggie Bucks.

True, the business did not sell alcohol to the student, but it fed the student bad food that resulted in a fatal case of food poisoning. What is the difference between that and a fatal drunk driving accident?

The drunk driver, a 21 year-old Aggie Bucks using student, died after leaving a bar where he or she became intoxicated by alcohol purchased with Aggie Bucks.

The food poisoned pizza lover, an Aggie Bucks using student of regardless age, died after eating a piece of bad pizza purchased with Aggie Bucks.

What is the difference? Both students were well within their legal rights in making their respective purchases. Both purchases ended fatally.

It's the 1990s, someone is going to sue. Will they come after the University? Possibly.

Is that what the University believes? Possibly.

Is that the reasoning it may give us for not allowing Aggie Bucks to be used in purchasing alcohol? Probably.

Given the threat that the multi-headed monster bred from the mere inception of Aggie Bucks poses to the University and the community as it relates to the sale of alcohol, my guess is that the University ideally wants to govern the morals of the Aggie Buck-holding student body, and do so by hiding behind the robe of Mother Justice.

The student body will buy into the the University's word that potential legal troubles are too much to risk when measured against the sale of alcohol via University-brokered Aggie Bucks.

That is a shame, not only for the 21-and-over Aggie Bucks-holding faction of the University, but for the integrity of the University itself.

Drew Diener is a junior English major

Newspapers give public balance of fact, opinion

With more reliability than many alarm clocks, every morning it is always there. It isn't always in the same spot, but it is always there. Waiting in a dew-drenched plastic bag, that roll of smudgy newspaper gives this crazy world a kind of indexed cohesiveness.

JENNY MAGEE
COLUMNIST



ing popularity as a news source is such a good thing.

The brevity and convenience of telecommunication has taught busy Americans to snack on soundbites while foregoing a healthy, balanced meal of newspaper reading. This same philosophy explains why there is at least one Dairy Queen in every American town. We like things fast and convenient; substance isn't necessarily a major concern.

Television and radio newscasts aren't designed to give in-depth information. They give the basic facts. When journalism students are taught to write in broadcast style, they are told to eliminate detail under the assumption that interested viewers will turn to a newspaper for comprehensive coverage. Television and radio newscasts function wonderfully in giving their basic information, but they simply lack the time that is necessary to go into proper detail.

Another integral part of newspapers, that only appears in a watered-down form in telecommunication broadcasts, is opinion pieces.

Television and radio stations are far too concerned with ratings and boxed into time frames to carry the wide range of varying opinions, some of which are radical and unpopular.

It would be a great tragedy if radical opinions lost their passageway to moderate citizens.

Maybe we don't agree with radical ideas, but many times we find a flower in a plot of mud.

Furthermore, one of the surest ways for people to figure out what they do believe in is to know for sure what they do not believe in.

Newspapers will probably still be an integral part of the world of communication for many years to come, but it is the form that they will be in that remains unanswered.

It is very possible that our children will read the comics by clicking on icon of Ziggy.

And maybe there is nothing fundamentally wrong with using computers as a medium to distribute newspapers. The dog can't fetch it in the morning, but it would save paper.

The past couple of decades have one thing clear — the convenience of telecommunication has blown out the candle on the days of competing daily newspapers. Only the future will tell us the news of what became of the great American tradition of newspaper journalism.

Jenny Magee is a junior English and journalism major



MAIL CALL

Republican agenda sadly misrepresented

As a conservative, I feel compelled to respond to Sterling Hayman's April 20 column. Surprisingly, I am more open-minded than most people would expect from a conservative.

However, there is nothing I disrespect more than an uninformed opinion. I believe Hayman was grossly uninformed in this article.

First, the misconception that the Republicans in Congress want to cut federally subsidized school lunch programs is just not correct.

Actually, the federal government will be increasing the school lunch program by three to four percent, given to the states as grants. Rest assured that the children will not "go undernourished."

Second, all Americans would not be paying income tax under the flat tax bill. The proposed legislation would actually raise the tax exempt statute to Americans making less than \$25,000.

As the tax code stands now, the wealthy can utilize so many loopholes and tax write-offs that their tax percentage is much lower than their tax bracket would suggest. A flat tax would prevent the use of these techniques and actually raise the percentage they are currently paying.

Finally, I would like to address the fact that President Clinton has not lowered the deficit; he has merely slowed its growth.

Furthermore, since he refinanced the national debt on short-term bonds, the interest payments have soared, piling more on the budget deficit.

It saddens me to see a political science major stoop to the depths of party politics when he asserts that the Democrats are suddenly the "better party."

Curtis Neason
Class of '96

Taylor right on target condemning Shalala

I just wanted to let David Taylor know how much I appreciated reading his column, "Vietnam Vets still deserve respect." I always thought Vietnam Vets were always the least respected. And I do remember my History 106 class when there were many people who protested the government and its wicked ways for sending troops to fight a winless war. I never really understood, though, why they were protesting. I always thought that we shouldn't have been protesting the war, but supporting the troops that left their Mother country to fight in the war. To die for the country that seemed to turn its back when they most needed it. It's never too late to respect the ones that gave their life for one's country.

It's not a political thing. Anybody that is willing to give blood, sweat and tears deserves my respect; I could care less what any secretary of health says. And anybody that is willing to stand up to people like Shalala, who does not seem to respect the People, should be considered the "best and brightest."

Joseph Piotrowski
Class of '97

Threat of terrorism no reason to deny rights

If there is one thing in this world that truly disgusts me, it is the knee jerk reaction of those who would give up their civil rights in the face of terrorism.

Adam Hill's opinion guest column on Monday, April 24, which suggested that we should grant 'total authority' to a 'counter terrorism agency' flies in the face of everything that our government is founded on.

Hill is calling for nothing short of a return to the McCarthy era purges of suspected communists.

It seems that the communists of yesterday have become the terrorists of today.

I am not advocating leniency toward terrorists. Rather, I ask that the government abide by the laws of the land and respect the rights of its law-abiding citizens in its search for the perpetrators of this heinous crime.

It is only when the terrorists have struck such fear in the hearts of Americans that we are willing to give up our civil rights that they have truly won.

Stanley Wood
Class of '96

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style, clarity and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald. A valid student I.D. is required. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call Fax: (409) 845-2647
013 Reed McDonald E-mail:
Texas A&M University Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu
College Station, TX 77843-1111